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# THE FINE ARTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>

BY CHARLES R. MOREY

THE fine arts were introduced into the curriculum of American universities by two scientists who have other claims to fame, Joseph Henry and Samuel F. B. Morse. Over a century ago Henry lectured on architecture in Princeton and Morse on "The Literature of the Arts of Design" in New York University. The next institution to admit the subject was the University of Vermont, whose catalogue of 1853 offered lectures on "The Principles of the Fine Arts" by the Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, the Reverend Joseph Torrey. The fourth was the University of Michigan, where Alvah Bradish was Professor of the Theory and Practice of the Fine Arts from 1852 to 1863.

It is true that the Fine Arts and Mr. Bradish entered the curriculum by the back door, so to speak, since his appointment seems to have followed the gift to the University of an alligator and specimens of Caribbean fish, and the post carried no salary or even the privilege of giving courses. This privilege, and sixty-five dollars as compensation, were finally granted in 1858, when Professor Bradish delivered fourteen lectures on the fine arts, returning the stipend however, being piqued by the lack of enthusiasm for his services manifested by the Board of Regents. His wounded spirit revived in 1861 when the senior class made a special demand for his lectures, and a small salary went with the granting of this request, but the Board stopped the course in 1863.

The dubious ministry of Professor Bradish did not, however, reflect an indifference to the fine arts on the part of the founders of the University nor of the Board of Regents. A department of "Fine Arts, Engineering and Architecture" was contemplated in the original act creating the University. A fine arts collection was commenced in 1855, and the Museum of Art was founded in 1858. A curriculum in art history was foreshadowed by courses in Greek and Roman archaeology that were initiated in the seventies, and the interest developed by these led finally to the establishment of a Department of Fine Arts in 1911.

The story of the fine arts at Michigan is fairly typical of its very gradual recognition in the American university curriculum.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission from: *A University between Two Centuries: Proceedings of the 1937 Celebration of the University of Michigan*, Edited by Wilfred B. Shaw, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1937, pp. 79-89.

Colonel Isaac Edwards Clark, who made a survey of art education for the Federal Bureau of Education in 1874, listed only eight colleges (he should have added Antioch, Oberlin, and Wisconsin) as furnishing facilities for the study of art, and four of these were included only for their art collections, Michigan among them. In 1912, Baldwin Smith's survey found ninety-five institutions giving courses in the history of art, although twenty-seven of these still had no chair in the subject but offered the courses in other departments. The progress since then can be seen in the Carnegie Corporation's survey of 1934 by Hiss and Fansler, which listed about 50 colleges and universities offering *graduate* work in the fine arts. This was of special interest to the Carnegie Corporation, inasmuch as that institution, by its grants of scholarships for graduate work in the fine arts during the years 1924-1930 had vigorously accelerated the progress of the history of art as a field of higher education by the simple method of directing into it some of the best young talent in the country.

The effect of sending out to the colleges and universities the eighty picked young men and women who won the Carnegie scholarships in the fine arts will be felt for a long time to come, though signs are not lacking that new stimulus of the same sort is necessary now. These fine young scholars are not all in the colleges and universities, some having gone into archaeological field work and some into museums. But those who joined the faculties proceeded to teach their subject with none of the apologies offered by their predecessors, assuming from the start that the history of art was a recognized and highly important constituent of the humanistic curriculum.

The response to their enthusiasm has been a steady increase in undergraduate interest in the subject, which has held its ground remarkably during the decline in recent years of the study of the humanities throughout the American colleges and universities. The history of art appeals to the student as the single humanistic subject in the modern curriculum which gives him an adequate survey of the history of the human race. The specialization that has gone on in departments of history, emphasizing more and more the modern European and American epochs, has left the student with no perspective on the earlier periods. The history of philosophy lacks, for the student, concreteness of illustration, and in the departments of languages and literatures, the putting together of the pattern of culture's evolution is a piecemeal and laborious process. "The history of art," said one undergraduate to me, "takes you all

the way through." It also can illustrate the history of humanity by concrete example as can no other discipline: the collective aspirations of an epoch or a race emerge in characteristic forms of architecture; the bold expression of firmly held and clearly conceived ideas presents itself in sculpture, and the more subtle and ingenious play of feeling, the secrets of the spirit, reveal themselves in painting and in music.

The sequence of the arts recorded above is generally conceded, among experienced teachers of our subject, to furnish the best approach. The collective origin of any style of architecture makes it *perforce* more easy of understanding to the beginner, since it lacks the imprint of individual personality which sometimes puzzles while it charms, in a painter's or composer's work. Sculpture, too, cannot avoid a certain clarity of statement by virtue of its third dimension which insists on definition. Through these two disciplines the student learns the grammar and rhetoric of art, mastering its vocabulary of forms and design, to apply the novel linguistic thus acquired to his subsequent study of painting and music.

He is in somewhat better case, I think, than his fellow in history, or philosophy, or the literatures, when they undertake to interrogate the past. The other disciplines deal of necessity with outstanding mentalities, expressive to be sure of their respective epochs, but far more subjectively and with far more detachment than their artistic contemporaries. The architect, sculptor, painter, composer is the very child of his time, and his is the only effective universal language that has ever been invented.

How many of our undergraduates know enough Greek to read the plays of Aeschylus or the odes of Pindar? How much will they learn of the uncanny clarity of the Hellenic mind by modern versions of the Greek historians? Yet they never fail to grasp the quality of Greek genius as they grow familiar with its sculpture. The confusing medieval chronicles, and the scanty remains of medieval literature, leave the student with the impression that the intelligible history of the race leaps from antiquity to the Renaissance; it is only as he becomes aware of the rugged force of Romanesque architecture and sculpture, and the nervous grace of Gothic painting, that he realizes the conflict of reason and impulse that makes the Middle Ages. I have never known a student to really understand the Renaissance through its literature alone, or from reading its historians. From these he will never get that earthy sense of what was being said and thought and felt in Florence, or Bruges, or Nuremberg,

that he unconsciously assimilates from his adventure into the art of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The history of art is thus indispensable to the student as the correlating discipline among the humanities, the means whereby he may achieve the historical perspective which is more or less the inheritance of the European boy or girl, but is so conspicuously lacking to the American without university or college training, and, one grieves to say, to very many who are said to have had it. This ability to interrogate the past with profit to our evaluation of the present is not the only element, but it is the most essential element, in a liberal education. It is the element which transmutes the accumulation of facts, or mere natural talent, into culture.

*Wer nicht von drei tausend Jahren  
Sich weiss Rechenschaft zu geben  
Bleibt im Dunkel unerfahren  
Mag von Tag zu Tage leben.*

The commencement addresses that make the month of June the annual period of appraisal of higher education tell us in various ways that such training is intended to fit the American boy or girl for life, to make him or her at home in the world. In this process it is evident that the function of the natural sciences is to acquaint the student with the physical world about him rather than with humanity, except in so far as the human being is the complex of cells as the biologist considers him, or the passive sum of his reactions as he is viewed by some psychologists. This is not to say that our scientific brethren have nothing to do with shaping popular estimates of human values—we all know that queries in the public prints on religious and moral problems are nowadays addressed not to the philosophers or theologians, but to the scientists and psychologists.

By and large, however, one can say that the student expects to be enlightened as to his physical environment by the natural sciences, and as to his relations with human kind by the social sciences and the humanities. In the freshman's view the social sciences have in common with the natural sciences the advantage that both deal with something contemporary, and something open to testing by the experience of immaturity. Neither division involves an historical perspective. The natural sciences nowadays look back scarcely farther than a generation, and it is hard to find a course in politics or economics that requires or imparts a knowledge of history before the eighteenth century. The social sciences, finally, as compared with both the natural sciences and the humanities, demand much

less preparation; they involve no knowledge of advanced mathematics and can get along so far as the undergraduate is concerned without asking him to read any language but English. The entrance requirements for higher education in this country could nearly all be scrapped as prerequisite to the college and university curriculum in the social sciences.

The above does not entirely explain the recent remarkable shift to the social sciences in course electives within the universities. The troubled state of the world is sufficient reason for the sharp direction of our youth's attention to social and economic problems. But it is significant that this shift is coincident with the unmistakable decline in the average standard of higher education, as revealed by recent surveys like that of Dr. Learned, of college education in Pennsylvania. If we suspend for a moment our native tendency to identify progress with lapse of time, and look the situation in the face, we will realize that while our students have perhaps more information than they used to have on graduation, they have, when averaged up, less culture. A broader investigation of the cause for this will reveal, I think, that what occasions in our supposedly educated youth their more than occasional cultural vacuity is the intrusion into higher education of vocational instruction.

What do we expect of higher education? Wisdom in judgment, understanding of one's fellows, harmony with environment. In short, the result of mature experience. We send our boys and girls to college in the hope that they may acquire some sort of substitute for such experience in time to obviate bitter lessons later on; that they may issue from college as individuals with a capacity for happiness, and as peaceful and constructive citizens—as well-rounded products, in a word, sufficiently spherical to roll smoothly along the rough alleys of contemporary existence. This result is not produced by vocational education, since it contracts rather than enlarges the student's perspective even in a contemporary sense, to say nothing of the historical. The American belief in vocational training resides in our confidence in mechanical processes; we think that by training teachers in schools of education how to impart what they do not know, and by coaching journalists in schools of journalism how to comment on what they do not understand, that we can make of them good teachers and good editors. A professor of design in a school of architecture spoke to me recently in bitter accents of the effect of technical courses in the undergraduate years on the stu-

dents who came to him for graduate design. He complained of their preoccupation with constructional detail, to the exclusion of ideas: "They design like contractors," he said.

The bearing of this on the fine arts in higher education is considerable. Of late the vocational interest—the insistence on technical training in the arts, never altogether absent from current concepts of art in the colleges and universities—has been increasing in a way that bids fair to undermine the fine quality of the instruction in art-history which has been maintained for a generation by the graduate schools in the fine arts, and which was standardized at a high humanistic level by the Carnegie scholarships.

A student recently applied for a fellowship to enable him to pursue graduate work in the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton. He was well recommended from his university, and submitted a record of respectable grades. But the list of subjects which he had studied as an undergraduate was so lacking in essential underpinning for graduate work in the field of art-history that not only was his application for a fellowship refused, but he was advised not to enter the graduate school. He had had an academic year of Elementary Newswriting and one term of Proofreading; one year of Background of Social Sciences; one of Beginner's Psychology; one of Principles of Economics; one year on Living Writers and another on the Nineteenth Century French Novel; four years of Physical Education; two of Military Education; and a term each of English Poetry, the Literature of the Renaissance, The American Novel, German, and Camp Cookery. Of the nineteen units he presented for entrance to his university, four represented English, four French, two Mathematics, one and a half Science, three were in History, and the remaining four and a half were divided among Commerce, Occupations, and Art. The preoccupation with creative art shown in this last entrance offering was continued in the university, where he took two technical courses in art throughout the freshman and sophomore years, five in his junior year, four in the senior year, and four in his one year of graduate work. The industry of this young man, to judge from the face of his record, was enormous; he never had less than six full courses in any undergraduate year, and at one time he had seven. He had no Latin, and the only other tools he could bring to his graduate work were his French and his excellent training in drawing and painting. But this last had not satisfied, but only developed in him the desire, to quote

the words of his application, for a "background suitable, from an historical standpoint, for the understanding of contemporary or modern art."

Judgments based on statistics submitted by our registrars are not too good, but it would seem that here was a talented young man who had received what is fast becoming the typical American university education, and had found himself at the end of it without that which a university is supposed to provide; namely, the "historical background" from which to understand, as an educated man might be expected to understand, the phenomenon of modern art. It had also left him without the linguistic tools with which an educated graduate can expect to go on. What would a student with no Latin do with the documentation of the art of the Middle Ages or the Renaissance? What historical perspective can be afforded by an education that was limited almost entirely to consideration of the last hundred years? One of the letters accompanying his application stated that he was "inclined toward an intellectual approach to the problem of painting." Why should the years of college have been mainly employed in the neglect of such development of the mind in favor of a training of the hand and eye?

This application was denied with great regret, since his testimonials indicated intelligence, industry, and character, and the probability that he would have been a very desirable graduate student, had he had a liberal education. This is one horn of the dilemma into which the fine arts in higher education is being forced by the technical and vocational invasion; the other is presented not by the preferences of students, but by the educational theories of some of the colleges and universities themselves. The slogan "Learn by doing" has made numerous converts in the last decade. But what one learns by doing is to do, not to *think*, wisely and richly, and this last is the objective of the liberal education. Yet the applications for teachers in the fine arts lay increasing stress on "creative ability" (by which the ability to paint is usually meant), particularly in the case of the smaller institutions. One president wrote me concerning an opening for an instructor in art and aesthetics, that the candidate "should possess a good background in the history of the arts, including the graphic, plastic, musical, dramatic, and literary. He should have a wide acquaintance with various aesthetic theories and the history of philosophy as well as some acquaintance with the psychology of art. Finally, he must have some creative ability and sense of craftsmanship in the arts in order that he may recognize

particular talents when students are working in the laboratory." Another executive sought a man "who through experience in the history of art and the practical performance in art will develop into a valuable teacher whose lectures and personal art ability will attract and hold students and at the same time expand this phase of work in a department where intimate relations of theory and practice of art go hand in hand."

During an experience of forty years in the field of higher education in the fine arts I have known, among hundreds of teachers, not more than one or two who could satisfactorily fill the above positions. The combination of the accomplished humanist and the trained artist is an almost impossible hybrid. The one is an effective teacher because of a highly developed critical ability that would neutralize the creative instinct of an artist. In the combination of the two there is the frustration of both. There never was a really good artist who could teach the history of art as a humanistic discipline, nor an effective historian of art who was a really good artist. What the writers of the above-mentioned letters should have been seeking, in my opinion, was one or the other, or both.

There is no question that some knowledge of artistic practice is a great help in the historical study of the fine arts. It helps the student to appreciate the difficulties of technique that entered into great creations, and to understand the extent to which these affected the artist's expression. But after all, what the student learns thereby is technique, not content, and content is what he is there to get. The absorption of ultra-modern painting with technical devices and effects, and the elimination, to the best of its ability, of ideas, has had its share in emphasizing the formal aspect of painting and sculpture in historical courses. It is as if one should concentrate, in the study of a poet, on his meters and rhymes rather than on what he has to say or his epoch has to say through him. The practice of drawing and painting is being steadily encouraged in all forward looking universities at the present time, as it should be, but in the ones with much experience in the teaching of the history of art, this sort of thing is made to a large extent an extra-curricular avocation. At Princeton, while recently the facilities for art instruction have been much extended, the extension has also taken the form of a free atelier where students can draw, paint or model under supervision and without credit.

Aside from the temperamental incompatibility mentioned above, it is difficult to see how we are to find the time for training a gradu-

ate student to fill one of these positions which calls for a competent art-historian "who also has creative ability." At present, to prepare a graduate student for the general graduate examination in the history of art requires from half to a whole year longer than is the case in the other humanities. He must be an historian of sorts, well versed in the history of philosophy, acquainted with ancient and modern languages, and must know his way about in their literatures. How else shall he interpret fully to the students he is to teach, all the accumulation of racial tradition, of epochal trend, of religious creed, that enters somehow into every work the hand of man has made? He must have explored his own field so widely that the boundaries of the other humanities for him have disappeared, and be in some degree at least that ultimate desideratum of every university campus, the professor of things in general—a lofty and arduous ideal, no doubt, and one that we of the fine arts faculties never really reach, but I have yet to find one of our ilk that did not retain to the very end of his career the youthful and catholic curiosity about all things human that the study of the fine arts awakens, and the never-ending ambition to compass perfection sometime as the humanist *par excellence*.

*Princeton University*

## ART AND OBJECTIVITY

BY CLIFFORD AMYX

IT WAS to be expected that some reply would be forthcoming to the article "Science and Abstract Art" by Joachim Weyl in the January issue of the JOURNAL. Since none has appeared in recent issues I have undertaken the task of a reply to a position which seems to me to demand too much of the modern artist, if I interpret Dr. Weyl's views correctly. In addition, there is a fundamental misconception of the ultimate validity of the rôle of analogy in modern critical writing among the arts, and science as influencing the arts.

After a passing dismissal of the *Zeitgeist* as a basis for the assumption for a common cultural motive and expression, Dr. Weyl proposes, in accord with many current interpretations, that art has recently pretended to a newer objectivity. This is an objectivity not socially directed as was the *Neue Sachlichkeit* in Germany, but an attempt to deal with the "stuff" of existence, an attempt to say something as objectively valid as the work of the scientist. "A reality

is intended which is more objective than any known to artists before." (COLLEGE ART JOURNAL, II:2, p. 44) In the work of Cézanne, cubism, and futurism respectively, analogs are to be found, according to Dr. Weyl, in the conceptions of Galileo, Descartes, and Newton. I gain the impression that he believes that art is, in relation to "objective" values, about where science stood in the seventeenth century. The artist will therefore, if such a path is indicated, not fail to proceed along the basis thus far established, ". . . along the stony road of error and confusion which science has come during these last three centuries." (Ibid., p. 46) Dr. Weyl does not predict that such a retreading of the path of science will occur, but if his analogs between the work of seventeenth century science and modern art are tenable, then artists are in for the greatest "double take" of all time. By implication all of the analogs proposed by writers with implications of the relation between modern abstract art and certain current scientific formulations of space-time, are dismissed as "mysterious" relations.

The basis on which analogs are proposed among the various fields of human endeavor, with a view to clarifying their interrelation, has been insufficiently explored. Art critics who seek for the broader implications of the work of an artist, have perhaps done more in direct exploration of concurrent fields than have the scientists, who almost congenitally believe in the self-sufficiency of their own discipline. Men who have, from the basis of science, sought for wider implications, usually become philosophers and suffer the tortures of the "subjective" method in that area. The scientific worker evolves his own content as he goes along, or merely checks to see that his work corresponds with the world. The artist, however, is notoriously a reservoir for the debris and detail of the universe, and it is the evident duty of the critic to seek out all possible interrelations. As an instrument in this type of exploration, the loose analogical type of subsumption has been found of great value.

In deference to the position adopted by Dr. Weyl I must say that I have found much that is annoyingly "mysterious" in such writing. Analogs are proposed which are no more than figures of speech and it is often difficult to determine the exact degree of validity to which the analog pretends in explication of the motives and fruits of expression. Among the arts the difficulty is often resolved by formal means, with the work of Woelflin as a prime example. When the disciplines under discussion are as disparate as

the various arts and sciences this formalistic method becomes somewhat more tenuous. The work of Giedion is usually interpreted as an extension of this type of exploration. If this work is to be interpreted, as I believe it must, as an extension of this method to other fields, the *sine qua non* of validity is stylistic placement. This spadework in placement validates the drawing of the higher generic concepts necessary to the explication of the interrelation of the fields. As an example, it serves no purpose to call Miro's work surrealist and then proceed to the generic qualities of surrealism and their relation to Freudian concepts, until the method of work used by Miro is adequately determined as surrealist, as it certainly was.

The broadest implicit notion in this type of procedure is contemporaneity. Mere contemporaneity is certainly not enough, apart from the establishment of generic qualities through stylistic placement, but as a rough and admittedly tenuous guide it has yielded the most significant results in art criticism. The violation of this rule of thumb, as proposed by Dr. Weyl in saying that "Cézanne paints Galileo's universe," (Ibid., p. 44) can produce only the equivalent of anachronism. The influence of Galileo on Cézanne, if not fortuitous, is better traced through the intervening figure of Poussin, for whose "solidity" Cézanne had great reverence. The mere verbal similarity of the mutual geometricization of nature conceived by Galileo and Cézanne, might equally well lead us to the notion that Cézanne paints Euclid's world, for the geometric figure was the perfection of nature, and therefore its valid interpretation, to the Greeks. The notion of contemporaneity will apportion the relative validity of the two proposed analogs.

It might be questioned whether any such analogs are subject to validation. I can only point again to the prerequisite of stylistic placement in examination of such validity, and the difficulties of such a procedure when attempted in the different disciplines. Let us consider the possible relation of a cubist picture and any individualization of the Riemann geometry. A mistake at the outset would be the comparison of any two objects in their mere particularity, especially the positing of the individual picture against the logically coherent system of postulates for the Riemannian world. We will not have the equivalent of the postulates until the generic qualities of cubism are established. Admitting the fact that cubism can not be systematized in the same fashion, for the work of art can have no real existence apart from its individuality, we

are forced to talk about the systems of both in conceptual prose, our ordinary academic method of communication. The difficulty in rendering either the Riemann postulates or the generic qualities of cubism adequately is therefore something which we cannot escape. The difficulty of this procedure is admitted by Dr. Weyl, and we might both conceive that it is easier to have a "feeling" about both phenomena.

We are not looking for any point to point correspondence between the individualization of the elliptic geometry of Riemann and the cubist "style" as exemplified in a picture by Picasso. To do so would demand that art illustrate geometry or that geometry guide art. The communal point is that both systems, the one conceptual and the other perceptual, have import about a world in which man lives. They have modified, not only their own disciplines, but the day to day conception of the world about us. Each of these systems says something about the straight line: the infinite straight line of Euclid and the infinite straight line of traditional perspective in painting. The almost inevitable consequence of abstracting from the perceptual space of cubism, is that we get generic qualities which seem to demand equation with current scientific conceptions as individualized in the geometries, which are already in a conceptual medium. The common denominator of all this concern has been space-time.

In this concern with the problems of space-time many profess to see that painting is attempting to convey a new objectivity, and on this basis Dr. Weyl proposes his hypothesis about a possible future course for art. Viewed in the historical light of art, this is a vastly over-emphasized phase of art activity. Painters in the attempt to unburden themselves of narrative and representational qualities, both of which cannot be lightly dismissed from art, have fancied that they are dealing with a more fundamental "stuff" of existence than the social values which were formerly paramount. This cannot be denied, but it is a mistake to assume that there will be any equation with the objectivity of science, or that the stuff of existence yields only to one type of objectivity. If the painter has approached conceptual space more closely than science approaches perceptual space, he is only exercising his painterly prerogative in dealing with the universe in his own medium.

In examining the rôle of objectivity in art care should be taken to examine the exact nature of the objectivity intended, and the possible equation of this with the objectivity of the scientist. From

the writing of modern artists, such as the constructivists, we might assume that they are concerned to create a rigidly objective method. In some cases the lines which seem to separate the artistically and mathematically constructed object are vague. As a humorous example I have recently thought of adding a soap film to the wire constructions of Calder in order to increase their "objective" validity. But this is, of course, a false similarity, and the work of Calder is probably less "objective" than the Parthenon. The immutable fact is that art is moved by artistic laws less exclusively than science is moved by scientific considerations, but this cannot alter the fact that in developing an artistic objectivity artists will be subject primarily to artistic considerations.

The hypothesis concerning the possible evolution of art, as presented by Dr. Weyl, allows of two possibilities. If art borrows the objectivity of science, it destroys itself as a discipline. I presume that no one can envision such a possibility seriously. If we hold to the possibility that art will create its own objectivity according to artistic law, then certainly art will suffer along the road of error and confusion, but with dignity. The compartmentalization which Giedion believes to have taken place as a result of systemic demands is a phenomenon which has disturbed many who seek for a more unified approach outside the sciences. Artistic criticism is a prime method of stalking the spectre of the *Zeitgeist*, which may tell us something about contemporary life.

*Lexington, Kentucky*

## THE BÄUHAUS BEFORE 1922

BY HELMUT VON ERFFA

OFTEN I have been asked: "Is there a Bauhaus style?" More pertinently the question should be: "Did Gropius by founding the Bauhaus deliberately create a new style?" Gropius himself emphatically denies this: "The object of the Bauhaus was not to propagate any style, system, dogma, formula or vogue, but simply to exert a revitalizing influence on design. We did not base our teaching on any preconceived ideas of form, but sought the vital spark of life behind life's ever-changing forms."<sup>1</sup> On the other

<sup>1</sup> W. Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*, N.Y., 1936, p. 62. See also A. Doerner "The background of the Bauhaus" in *The Bauhaus 1919-1928* edited by Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius and Ise Gropius, N.Y. 1938, p. 15.

hand, both Alfred Barr and H. Russell Hitchcock speak of a definite change of style in the Bauhaus about 1922: "From the mysticism and transcendentalism of the expressionists the Bauhaus turned to clarity, discipline. . . ."<sup>2</sup> The disagreement between Gropius and the American art historians is only an apparent one. Gropius denies the deliberate creation of a *maniera*; Barr and Hitchcock see the work of the Bauhaus as an integral expression of its period. The emanation of the "vital spark of life behind life's everchanging forms" is what the art historian calls *style*.

In clear and lucid language Gropius has set forth the ideas and aims behind the foundation of a Bauhaus in 1919. Its most important aim was to introduce good design into the world of crafts and industry. This, of course, had been the aim of the Werkbund,<sup>3</sup> of which Gropius was already a member, but what was new was Gropius' requirement that the student of the Bauhaus work for three years as an apprentice in one of the workshops (carpentry, weaving, etc.) and undergo a two-fold instruction in form and in the professional handling of a material. "The Bauhaus workshops were really laboratories for working out practical new designs for present day articles and improving models for mass production."<sup>4</sup>

Such a sober and practical program, however, would have found few adherents in the years immediately following 1918, a period seething with many conflicting ideas of a new way of life. We must read in this light the first proclamation of the Bauhaus in which Gropius called for a new guild of craftsmen: "Without the class distinction which raises an arrogant barrier between the craftsman and the artist. Together let us conceive and create a new building of the future which will embrace architecture and sculpture and painting in one unity and which will rise one day toward heaven from the hands of a million workers like *the crystal symbol of a new faith*."<sup>5</sup>

This was the tenor in which Gropius addressed us who were new students in the spring of 1921. "You are to work on the building of the future. In the Middle Ages nobody worked in an individual

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"But to speak of a cut and dried 'Bauhaus style' would be to revert to the cultural paralysis of the 19th century with its free styles."

<sup>2</sup> A. Barr, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, N.Y. 1936, p. 156. See also: H. Russell Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture*, N.Y. 1929, pp. 187 ff. Despite minor errors the author recognizes the change in style in Gropius' work.

<sup>3</sup> Founded in 1907.

<sup>4</sup> Gropius, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, p. 19.

style. There was such close cooperation between the members of all guilds that one man would work on a window, another on a door, yet they were artistically harmonious because all workmen were one in spirit. Let us find this unity in spirit. It must come out of yourselves."\* Naturally we were elated. We were to shape a future style, the expression of our age. But then, our age was not the machine age. Ours was the age of expressionism, of the youth movement, of the new romanticism. We hoped for a new society that would break with the fetters of class distinction and do away with "false" traditions. If anybody still believed in *l'art pour l'art* or the *Jugendstil* the introductory course quickly drove it out of him.

It was given by Johannes Itten, a Swiss expressionist, whom Gropius had brought from Vienna to Weimar in 1919. Its purpose was to stimulate and release the creative faculties of the student. As far as I could ascertain from his Viennese students who worshipped him like a god, Itten believed that all evil in art was due to our overdeveloped powers of reasoning and to an undernourishment of intuition. I was told that when studios were not to be had in Vienna, Itten found the best one merely by intuition. Was not all bad nineteenth century art due to too much learning, too much knowledge of styles? Itten's teaching was part of the mysticism that swept over Germany in 1920-21. Everybody was reading the German mystics, Suso, Tauler, Meister Eckhardt, Jacob Boehme, or Buddha's sermons, or Lao-Tse. In 1920 a member of the youth movement preached on the steps of churches as a new John the Baptist, and later a former medal manufacturer, Werner Heuser, with a long beard and in a long, dark robe, made fiery speeches on the imitation of Christ to packed houses at Weimar. Itten gave him money and lodgings and announced in class after one of Heuser's speeches: "We have all heard a prophet."

His teaching then was based on the assumption that man will be part of the cosmos if he acts creatively directly from the subconscious, eliminating reasoning powers.<sup>7</sup> He began by making his

\* The importance of Gropius' break from the conception of the true artist as something outside of society (as, for instance, Oscar Wilde formulates it in L. Housman's *Echo de Paris*: "How can a man, who regards success as the goal of life, be a true artist?") and of his attempt to have the arts form a vital part of the social pattern, was at first little understood by his students. The reason for this was perhaps Weimar's hostile attitude toward the Bauhaus. The students were not yet part of the social pattern.

<sup>7</sup> Gropius was, at least in 1923, not in agreement with this extreme point of view. See: *Bauhaus 1919-1928*, p. 24 (translated from *Staatliches Bauhaus 1919-23, 1923*, p. 9).

students relax. He had them use Indian clubs to gain physical relaxation; then he had them draw circles in charcoal with a full arm's sweep, next from their elbows, and finally small circles with their thumbs and second fingers. Then followed exercises in expressiveness. "Draw a thistle, make it as sharp as you can." "Draw a feather and make it soft." One's creative ability was tested by drawing with charcoal the abstract *feeling* of rain, the *feeling* of spring or winter. After a masterful analysis of Sung paintings he told us that the Chinese artist had felt the landscape he painted, not copied it from nature but produced it because he was one with nature. While we put the charcoal on paper we were to be filled with the *feeling* of rain or snow. After that we proceeded to the drawing of materials. This had a double purpose. First it would enhance our tactile sense, then it was to bring us in harmony with the material we were to work with. Dürer's portraits were shown and his distinction of the texture of beard and fur given as an example. There was the theory current that unless you had a mystical relationship with your material you could not get the most out of it.

Our sense of form was developed by analyzing old masters. I don't think he ever analyzed any works except those of the old German and Netherlandish masters, or Giotto and El Greco. These analyses were exercises in chiaroscuro, composition, and expressiveness.

Finally we had to create *collages*. This was the final test of our creative capacity. Here he could discover if we could think in terms of materials and how they could be combined and if we could create something that had form.\*

That was not all. In 1921 Itten met Miss Gertrude Grunow who claimed to be able to coordinate, release and stimulate the student's creative forces by music and rhythmic dancing. For a full exposition of Miss Grunow's system the reader is referred to the *Bauhaus 1919-23*, pp. 20-23: "Der Aufbau der lebendigen Form durch Farbe, Form, Ton." I confess that even after several careful readings I still fail to grasp the meaning of her mystic conception of color and tone in relation to man. "Physicists and psychologists," she says in the beginning of her article, "have failed to find fundamental laws for the importance of color and tone for man; if one goes, however, to the *feeling* of phenomena (die Empfindungen der Erscheinungen) then there is revealed the structure of the whole

\* *Bauhaus 1919-23*, figs. 8-14 and *Bauhaus 1919-28*, pp. 33 and 35.

*world of realities* as it evolves from the human organism and the human mind.<sup>9</sup> After this bit of the anthropocentric the reader will probably beg me to stop. At the end of the article she stresses the development of the subconscious. "Too one sidedly has one taught discoveries, facts and theories while . . . active feelings, and experience *out of the subconscious*, received insufficient training (Pflege). . . . No wonder creative activity, imagination disappeared! In a place like the Bauhaus . . . a training of activity *proceeding from the subconscious* as a beginning and constant guidance will be indispensable."<sup>10</sup>

She made the extravagant claim of being able to develop any faculty whatsoever. "I could teach you boxing too," she told a classmate of mine who was endowed with a delicate physique. According to her, man's mind consisted of different layers: matter, reason, intuition, will, etc.<sup>11</sup> It was her task to organize these layers, so we would become good artists. The student had to stand with outstretched arms, close his eyes and concentrate on a color of the spectrum. "Don't think about it, feel it, be permeated by it, eradicate everything else. When you have it, then go to the next color." Miss Grunow claimed to know intuitively whether or not the student had really experienced the color. "That's not it," she would cry, "do it over again." There were actually some who believed her, just as she probably believed in herself, but most of us were sceptical.

In 1921 Itten introduced a new diet to the Bauhaus kitchen: Masdasnan, a religious sect with headquarters in Switzerland. These meals were supposed to make us spiritual, but only made us hungrier than usual. Itten believed in shaping not only our souls but our bodies as well.

Meanwhile a silent revolt against Itten was growing. It came into the open in December 1921, when the Bauhaus celebrated a very expressionistic Christmas Eve. Gifts were opened in the presence of all and greetings read and shown about. Itten received from a group of students the equivalent of a joke valentine which told him kindly to stay out of some of the workshops. When I asked older students about it I was told that he was disturbing them and trying to give advice in technical matters he knew nothing about. This was the

<sup>9</sup> "Der Aufbau der gesamten Welt, wie er sich vom menschlichen Organismus und vom menschlichen Geiste aus biologisch-historisch entwickelt."

<sup>10</sup> The italics are mine.

<sup>11</sup> "Wie das Licht in den Farben charakteristisch leuchtet und wirkt, so tragen die Statiken (?) charakteristisches Gepräge. Sie beruhen auf speziellen Schwerpunkten an besonderen Orten des menschlichen Körpers."

beginning of the events which led to his resignation. The first phase of the Bauhaus, the mystic one, passed with his departure in 1923.

When spring came in 1922 we all felt a change. There were new elements among the students. Some were the ascetics of the old order, some mere children of fourteen and fifteen, unspoiled and full of intuition; others sophisticated boys and girls from Berlin. Oscar Schlemmer, whose abstractions were not *felt* but frankly constructed, was beginning to exercise an influence on the sculpture shop. The fog of mysticism was gradually lifting. At a spring festival one of the skits contained cryptic allusions to *de Stijl*. "Will it rise or fall?" a large inscription read. It rose all right. The tall, pale figure of the black-shirted Theo van Doesburg had been seen in a students' exhibit monocling the *collages* in unconcealed disapproval. "The Bauhaus is all ingrown," he told me once. It was true. There is no doubt that his presence in Weimar exercised a profound influence on Bauhaus students although he never taught there. They were ready for it. Schlemmer had paved the way with his new seal for the Bauhaus before van Doesburg appeared. An influence stronger still than van Doesburg with his neo-plastic cubes and rectangles of primary colors, was Moholy-Nagy with his abstractions in volume and space.<sup>12</sup> The rest is history.

To evaluate Itten's teaching is not easy. Looking over his students' work both from the preliminary course and from the workshops one finds that the drawing of materials is excellent, but that the design of most of the weaving is extremely chaotic as soon as it abandons simple lines. Gropius' and Itten's insistence on breaking with tradition and their anxiety to free students from the dead weight of convention resulted at first in shapeless monstrosities,<sup>13</sup> in cubistic peasant furniture, or in the badly applied design of primitive people. Conversely, the utterly unromantic van Doesburg consciously continued and rarified Picasso's cubism and in his lectures traced his style back to Cézanne. He arrived at something that was in harmony with the machine age, not by intuition or Miss Grunow's color dance but by applying a most accurate sense of design which in turn was checked by the application of the Golden Section. However, it was not *de Stijl* group but the Bauhaus which actively produced good everyday articles.

<sup>12</sup> How Albers reshaped Itten's preliminary course can be learned from the chapter in *Bauhaus 1919-28* written by Albers (pp. 116 ff.).

<sup>13</sup> Moholy-Nagy writes: "I remember the first light fixture by R. Jucker done before 1923 . . . looking more like a dinosaur than a functional object." *Bauhaus 1919-28*, p. 136.

In 1923 the period of experimentation was over. The Bauhaus began to make contacts with industry. The "crystal symbol of a new faith" turned out to be glass and chromium plate.

*Northwestern University*

## THE INTRODUCTORY COURSE AGAIN

BY PAUL M. LAPORTE

**W**HETHER to use the historic or the appreciative approach is a dilemma becoming increasingly acute for the art teacher. Since most of his students are definitely uninformed as far as art is concerned, the teacher realizes that the history of art can mean little if they lack an understanding of the aesthetic qualities.

The traditional way of letting art grow on the student by giving him a survey of its history has definite advantages, but one is always perplexed by the aesthetic and philosophic implications which cannot be avoided, and which yet have no distinct place in one's scheme. On the other hand, the method of confronting the student with a complexity of aesthetic questions eliminates the important didactic support afforded by the historic approach.

The logical interrelation between history and appreciation is a question to be solved by the philosophers of art. A systematic connection, however, can easily be established, and will prove, in my opinion, of the greatest advantage in teaching. The way to benefit from both methods and yet avoid their disadvantages is found in a scheme which elucidates the interdependence of history and aesthetics. Instead of giving a broad picture of each period a number of problems are chosen, and each is pursued from its beginnings through the whole of history.

Below I put before the reader the program of a survey course developed through several years at a college preparatory school. Lectures and discussions illustrated with slides form the basis of the course. The students, however, are given texts illustrated with University Prints on certain fields for study and recapitulation. It may be objected that this program is too broad in scope, and hence can hardly be covered in a year. However, it is not necessary to include all parts of the scheme in one course. In class discussion one finds out the chief interests of his particular group of students. Accord-

ingly, several less interesting or difficult topics may be omitted. The flexibility of the scheme allows this without impairing the whole.

The chief advantage of the scheme lies exactly in the fact that historic circumstances are not approached directly. While the traditional method of teaching loads the student with a mass of dry facts which often mean little to him, this program keeps his interest by having them continually linked to a vital problem. The vicissitudes of a particular problem, pursued through the ages, force upon him the historic implications, and indirectly impress upon him the historic facts. Thus, knowledge and appreciation are linked with each other in an inseparable manner.

Michelangelo, for instance, is treated in connection with the following questions: painted and sculptural decoration of architecture, tombs, monuments, cult images, disintegration of perspective, compositional schemes of painting and sculpture, romanticism of the baroque, classicism of the renaissance, integration of classical and romantic features in baroque architecture, the personality of the modern artist, the artist's material through the ages, the architect as an artist, etc.

It is equally important to point out where the absence of Michelangelo's name is significant, as under the following heads: portraits, landscape and still life, perspective, primitivism and realism, etc. No beginner can get anything like a complete picture of Michelangelo's importance in a course of these dimensions, yet he comes into closer contact with him in our program than is the case in the traditional method. The many points of view under which the artist is considered help to enhance the student's understanding of his manifold significance.

To cite another example of our method, both the scarcity of portraiture in Greece, and its flourishing in Egypt and Rome throw light on the different conceptions of these periods. In this way the student is not only made to understand the different potentialities of portraiture, but he also realizes that a particular approach to art may practically exclude the use of portraiture.

Another phase in the program puts the student in the midst of the problem of functionalism in architecture. The fact that it is the outside of the Greek temple which is important, while the full artistic creation of the interior starts only in the middle ages, has many implications which can hardly be approached by any other method. It explains how a good building is an expression of its purpose; and by expanding the question to the partly sculptural,

partly picturesque architecture of the baroque it can also be shown that there always exists more than one possible solution to satisfy a particular need, and that the particular need is itself defined by the specific conditions of the human spirit at a given time.

This presentation of artistic problems and historic developments affords a mosaic of the arts which is not only interrelated in its parts, but also, by necessity, is related to the present in all of these parts.

## GUIDEBOOK TO THE HISTORY OF WESTERN ART

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## A NEW SPANISH INSTITUTE

BY WALTER W. S. COOK

THE many friends of José Gudiol, who was in this country from 1939 to 1941 as Lecturer at New York University and Carnegie Professor of Spanish Art at the Toledo Museum of Art, will be interested to know of the Instituto Amattler de Arte Hispánica, which he founded immediately after his return to Barcelona in June of 1941.

The new institute is housed in the palace of Miss Teresa Amattler, who is the sponsor of the plan. The palace, built by Puig y Cadafalch, contains many works of art of great importance, notably a distinguished collection of Spanish mediaeval glass collected by Miss Amattler and her father.

The director, Mr. Gudiol, is organizing the institute as a center for research and publication with the help of a staff of fourteen persons. A great library on Spanish art is being created, but the

most notable task of the staff is the accumulation of an archive of photographic negatives of Spanish art. One of the first steps was the purchase of the "Arxiu Mas" negatives numbering about 100,000. This most important collection of negatives was begun twenty-five years ago under the auspices of the Institut d' Estudis Catalans of Barcelona and for several years was largely supported by the Frick Art Reference Library in New York City and the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University. To this nucleus Mr. Gudiol added his own collection of about 40,000 negatives. Thus the collection at present comprises about 140,000 negatives, which are especially important because they preserve, at least in photographic form, many of the works of art destroyed during the Civil War in Spain.

To add to this great wealth of reproductive material, Mr. Gudiol has sent the photographer Pelayo Mas to Madrid in an attempt to photograph all of the works of art in that city. Already more than 4,000 negatives have been made from paintings in the Prado Museum. Many of the famous pictures were taken from the walls and photographed with many details under special lighting. From there, the photographer went to the Archaeological Museum where more than 2,000 photographs were made, especially of early Iberian sculpture. Work in both places is continuing. When it is completed Mr. Gudiol intends to proceed to other collections such as the Academia de la Historia, the Academia de San Fernando, the library of the University of Madrid, the Biblioteca Nacional, the Royal Palace and the Museum of Modern Art. The new collection of negatives is being catalogued and will be published in cooperation with the Casa Velasquez of Madrid.

While the acquisition of books and photographs plays a very important part in the activities of the institute, it is to be regarded primarily as a means to an end, which is to further research in the field of Spanish art by Spanish scholars and to publish the result of that research. Thus, arrangements have already been made for the publication of books by such distinguished scholars as Sánchez-Cantón, Director of the Prado Museum, Manuel Gómez-Moreno, José Ferrandis and Diego Angulo y Iñiguez. The arrangements are that the institute will furnish photographic material and that, in return, the scholars will publish their books under the auspices of the Instituto Amattler.

After the war, it is the hope of Mr. Gudiol that American students will be given fellowships to go to Spain to work on their dissertations under the guidance of, and with the use of the facilities of

the new institute in Barcelona, which will be open to the public.

We in America can never thank Mr. Gudiol too much for his transference of American educational ideas to Spain, and we hope that his plans will materialize as effectively and successfully as the founder hopes.

*New York University*

## NEW PROJECTION

BY BERN PORTER

**S**EARCHEs for greater unity between the artist's creative consciousness and the environment of the spectator rightly continue because aesthetic representation means little unless the artist and his audience function on identical levels. Two such methods for approaching this end concern us here.

The first technique, loosely termed "spatial exhibition" predominates in Peggy Guggenheim's "Art of This Century." Architect-designer Frederick J. Kiesler created it after twenty years of experiment culminating in the complete elimination of walls, pedestals and frames. "The attention of the onlooker and the message of a given work of art must in nowise be intercepted," he declares.

Past attempts toward this objective via the elimination of frames, extension of the painting over or around them and the application of the work on larger boards appear ridiculous in comparison with Kiesler's methods in which a picture's surroundings are completely modified with cantilever supports, suspension columns, mobile and demountable installations. These devices, independently disarming enough, free a painting at once and bring it into the space of action of the spectator. The color, the intensity and the diffusion of surrounding light are controlled to achieve this aim by determining in advance the reflection coefficient of all wall surfaces both as to volume and as to their combined effect upon the objects shown. Complete display, in fact, comes into its own when the spectator, seated, may grasp a frameless painting projecting freely from a neutral colored, concave wall and turn it to his particular fancy while over head a properly focused light shines down without glare.<sup>1</sup> Such presentation methods provide a marked impetus for the con-

<sup>1</sup> See "VVV" (triple V), vol. 1, No. 2-3, pp. 76-83, 1943 for further explanation and demonstration of Kiesler's plan.

tinued dissolution of plastic barriers across which man heretofore has looked from his inhabited space to the alien realm wherein art so reluctantly dwells. Says Kiesler, these "two opposing worlds must be seen again as jointly indispensable forces in the same world. The ancient magic must be recreated whereby the God and the mask of the God, the deer and image of the deer existed with equal potency, with the same immediate reality in one living universe." So be it.

A second approach<sup>2</sup> concerns the possibility of projecting the elements within a painting out toward the on-looker. It first came into notice as mere exhibitionism in cinematic optics and as an advertising plaything in which four-dimensional effects brought pitched baseballs and on-rushing locomotives into one's very lap. Special glasses were needed. Actually this kind of projection, in less spectacular terms, modifies the common methods for presenting the physical world whose objects appear as if arranged in the order of their decreasing size. Academic perspective as practiced by Italian masters gives the effect of moving into and behind the canvas plane to a marked degree. Distances up to fifty miles between the picture surface and the far horizon are depicted with seeming facility in such works as Ghirlandaio's *Adoration of the Magi* and Gian Bellini's *Transfiguration*. In other paintings the reverse is true. The head and halo of the Christus in Fra Angelico's *Assumption and Dormition of the Virgin* project forward, while the Christus of John La Farge's *Ascension of Our Lord*<sup>3</sup> with flowing robes and luminous cloud formations is much in advance of figures posed below.

It is this latter and rather uncommon phenomena which the new projection method seeks to enlarge upon and thus free a picture of the rigid limitations of surrounding frame and painted surface. Procedures common to optical physics combined with projection drawing and painting yield art forms that advance toward the spectator rather than recede from him. Effects of space and movement on the front and rear axes perpendicular to the canvas are achieved without the use of seeing aids or special glasses. Execution is accomplished with common techniques on flat, convex, concave and specially designed surfaces.

A simple form like an arrow, for example, may be drawn with its tail and one half of the shaft going into the paper but with the

<sup>2</sup>Devised by this author.

<sup>3</sup>Episcopal Church of the Ascension, 5th Avenue, New York.

head and other half of the body at right angles and in the plane of the illustration. With another right angle turn within the arrow head itself, the point may be made to pass through this plane. Color areas of both the arrow and its background are selected and placed to enhance the illusion. Clouds shaded to knife-like edges at the front and back with their greatest bulk in the center can be arranged on either side of a straight arrow to emphasize its forward or backward motion perpendicular to the drawing plane. If this surface is made permanently concave or convex rather than left flat, prior to working upon it, projection effects are improved. Study of the clouds surrounding the topmost figures in Pisanello's *Madonna Appearing to St. George and St. Anthony Abbot* will suggest how forward movement is also obtained through the use of concentric forms. Still other devices are evident in a recent color advertisement<sup>4</sup> for the McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, wherein a herculean figure steps from his sun lighted background out into adjacent printed areas and beyond to the reader himself. Even though the brightest parts of the body of the giant do not consistently represent those portions in advance of the "light window," nor the blue always depict those behind it, projection is very evident. In the more advanced stages of this technique forward-projecting forms interplay with shapes that float or are suspended within the intermediary space of the points of farthest advance and the plane of the canvas. Both the forward elements and the intervening objects may be artistically combined with those on the plane of the canvas and any drawn behind it by the conventional methods of perspective.

Although the development of the method is still in progress, it augurs well for some noteworthy advances in several branches of creative endeavor. Such a reversal of the inward recession of objects would (a) provide a sensational means for advertising and display art, (b) give interior decorators and designers a process for decreasing optically the dimensions of rooms and objects, (c) offer interesting possibilities for the decoration of ceramics, textiles and metals, and (d) open fresh avenues for painters of non-objective and abstract art.

*University of California  
Berkeley*

<sup>4</sup> *Time*, June 14, 1943, p. 16.

## QUOTATIONS FROM DIDEROT

J'en demande pardon à Aristote; mais c'est une critique vicieuse que de déduire des règles exclusives des ouvrages les plus parfaits, comme si les moyens de plaisir n'étaient pas infinis. Il n'y a presque aucune de ces règles que le génie ne puisse enfreindre avec succès. Il est vrai que la troupe des esclaves, tout en admirant, crie au sacrilége.

Les règles ont fait de l'art une routine; et je ne sais si elles n'ont pas été plus nuisibles qu'utiles. Entendons-nous: elles ont servi à l'homme ordinaire; elles ont nui à l'homme de génie.

Je voudrais bien savoir où est l'école où l'on apprend à sentir.

Chaque peintre a son genre. Un amateur demandait un lion à un peintre de fleurs. "Volontiers, lui dit l'artiste, mais comptez sur un lion qui ressemblera à une rose comme deux gouttes d'eau."

Dans la description d'un tableau, j'indique d'abord le sujet; je passe au principal personnage, de là aux personnages subordonnés dans le même groupe; aux groupes liés avec le premier, me laissant conduire par leur enchaînement; aux expressions, aux caractères, aux draperies, au coloris, à la distribution des ombres et des lumières, aux accessoires, enfin à l'impression de l'ensemble. Si je suis un autre ordre, c'est que ma description est mal faite, ou le tableau mal ordonné.

Voici ma règle: Je m'arrête devant un morceau de peinture; si la première sensation que j'en reçois va toujours en s'affaiblissant, je la laisse; si au contraire plus que je le regarde, plus il me captive, si je ne le quitte qu'à regret, s'il me rappelle quand je l'ai quitté, je le prends.

L'art est de mêler des circonstances communes dans les choses les plus merveilleuses, et des circonstances merveilleuses dans les sujets les plus communs.

Quelquefois la nature est sèche, et jamais l'art ne le doit être.

La nonchalance embellit une petite chose, et en gâte toujours une grande.

Éclairez vos objets selon votre soleil, qui n'est pas celui de la nature; soyez le disciple de l'arc-en-ciel, mais n'en soyez pas l'esclave.

Peindre comme on parlait à Sparte.

Les traités élémentaires de peinture, au rebours des traités élémentaires des autres sciences, ne sont intelligible que pour les maîtres.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

During the last fifty years Mesopotamian antiquities, especially inscribed clay tablets and seal cylinders, have been brought to this country in considerable numbers. These pieces are source material for the political and cultural history of the Ancient Orient, and experience has shown that among them are unique pieces of great scientific value. Since these documents should be made accessible to science, we are conducting a survey in order to compile a union list of all this material. As a preparatory step, all those libraries, museums, and private collectors who own Mesopotamian objects, even if only a few, are invited to communicate with: The Curator, Babylonian Collection, Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut.

ALBRECHT GOETZE  
*Yale University*

## THE WINTHROP BEQUEST TO HARVARD UNIVERSITY

WHEN Mr. Grenville L. Winthrop died in January of the present year, he bequeathed to Harvard the contents of his house in New York and his country home in Lenox, Massachusetts with an endowment for the care of the collection.

Because Mr. Winthrop rarely ventured forth to see a painting or sculpture but had the object brought to him, he became even in his lifetime something of a legendary figure. The full scope of his activity and the extraordinary catholicity of his taste were first known by those who made the inventories of the two houses after his death. Indeed it has taken several months to transport the priceless objects from New York and Lenox

to Cambridge, and the inventory shows more than 4,000 objects for which nine galleries in the museum have been completely rearranged.

Many have known of Mr. Winthrop's enthusiasm for nineteenth century French masters, especially Ingres, from whose hand come nearly forty drawings. Few know that through his generosity, the Fogg Museum now possesses the famous Peale *General Washington*, the Duplessis *Benjamin Franklin*, David's *Napoleon*, Watt's *Sir Galahad*, Rossetti's *Blessed Damozel*, Whistler's *Self-Portrait*, Sargent's *Lady Lister*, Rodin's *The Kiss*, and a series of fifty-two water colors by William Blake. The five reliefs from Persepolis and the Egyptian bronzes are truly regal; the group of Maya and Aztec sculptures notable. So great is the number of early Chinese jades and bronzes that only a selection can be shown at present. If only for the Chinese collection, the Fogg Museum should now become a place of pilgrimage.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Rembrandt, Selected Paintings*, 112 Plates in Photogravure and in Color with an introduction and notes by Professor Tancred Borenius. London, 1942, The Phaidon Press. \$4.50.

It testifies to the undiminished, perhaps even growing interest in the art of Rembrandt that the Phaidon Press, noted for inexpensive art books, can bring out a book on Rembrandt's paintings only six years after its own widely distributed volume on the same subject, edited by A. Bredius. The two publications, to be sure, show marked differences. In regard to the quality of its plates the new Phaidon *Rembrandt* is definitely superior to Bredius' book. The illustrations are larger and do better justice to the pictures within the limits of black and white. This is all the more gratifying as Rembrandt's paintings are likely to lose more in cheap reproductions than those of almost any other master. His subtle balance of light and shade has proved time and again to be a very elusive artistic element, even in expensive publications. There are, indeed, some pictures in this volume which I have never before seen reproduced so well. This is not true, unfortunately, of most of the color plates, which seem rather to be a concession to the public than an asset to the book. There are also a few photographs of details, all of which, however, had been used previously by Bredius.

The chief way in which this new publication differs from Bredius' "complete" *Rembrandt* is in its limitation to about one hundred paintings. It represents, as the cover claims, an effort "to give the best of Rembrandt in the best form." The idea of selecting only the top-notch works might, indeed, have real value if it were carried out. Yet one can hardly say that this has been done. While there is no point in quibbling about personal preferences, there are a good many pictures in this selection which surely,

in nobody's opinion, measure up to such omitted masterpieces as the *Jewish Bride*, the *Denial of Peter*, the Louvre *Emmaus*, or, to mention some portraits, to that of *Nicolaes Bruyningh*, of *Lairesse* and of the couple from the Widener collection. One also would wish that a few of the earliest works, like the *Balaam* or the *Tobias* could have been included, at the expense of pictures like the Berlin *Samson* (with its incredibly dull detail), the *Rabbi* of the Metropolitan museum, or the *Bearded Man* of the Hermitage.

Tancred Borenius has provided the accompanying text. He attempts to set Rembrandt's work against its historical background and stresses the fact that the master's art was derived from, and remained in constant communication with, the great tradition of Italian Renaissance and Baroque art. Supported as it is by illustrations and quotations from contemporary sources this part makes useful reading even though the influence of Tintoretto's treatment of light on that of Rembrandt seems overemphasized. It is followed by a chapter in which Rembrandt's development is traced along the customary lines, complete with the traditional interpretation of the subject of the *Nightwatch* as an exodus for a shooting competition, which, since Schmidt-Degener's study, is surely an untenable one. (Teachers may consult this study, in Dutch or in French, in *Onze Kunst*, or *L'Art Flamand et Hollandais*, in a series of articles appearing in the years 1914, 1916, 1917. No translation into English is available.)

A most valuable feature for many students, however, is the addition, for the first time in English translations, of three early "lives" of Rembrandt, those by Sandrart (1675), Baldinucci (1686) and Houbraken (1718). A preface and some notes and illustrations are helpful in understanding these early comments in their proper historical context. The reader will be aware of the contradiction between Baldinucci's insistence on the popular acclaim for the *Nightwatch* and the legend (referred to by Borenius as *recorded* (!) fact) that it was a failure. A critical catalogue of the plates, with summary descriptions of the colors, completes the textual part of the book.

I should like to add a few minor corrections and amplifications. P. 17: The Dutch army of the seventeenth century was not a "volunteer force of all able bodied men" but consisted, as was customary at that time, of hired mercenaries. This army was under the command of the princes of Orange and should not be confounded with the soldierly organizations of the guilds which formed a kind of "Burgher-guard" of highly questionable military value.—No. 33: The drawing HdG 711 is no longer believed to be a sketch of the picture.—Nos. 43 and 44: The two numbers should be reversed in accordance with the plates.—No. 68: The picture for some years has been on the American art market (Knoedler).—No. 75: The picture came from the collection of King Stanislaus August Poniatowski.

JULIUS S. HELD  
Barnard College, Columbia University

REGINA SHOOLMAN and CHARLES E. SLATKIN, *The Enjoyment of Art in America*, xvii + 792 p., 740 ill. Philadelphia and New York, 1942, J. B. Lippincott Company. \$10.00.

The sub-title of this large volume indicates its scope: "A survey of the permanent collections of painting, sculpture, ceramics and decorative arts in American and Canadian museums: being an introduction to the masterpieces of art from prehistoric to modern times." The foreword is by G. H. Edgell, director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Such an ambitious compilation naturally invites comparison with two other undertakings that have certain points of resemblance. One is *The Story of Art, the Lives and Times of the Great Masters*, published in 1940 by the authors of the present volume, and the other is *A Treasury of Art Masterpieces, From the Renaissance to the Present Day*, edited by Thomas Craven and published in 1939. Like the authors' earlier work, the text is a general narrative suitable for easy reading, and since purchasers of picture books are more apt to look at the illustrations than they are to read the text, space might perhaps better have been devoted to catalogue information regarding the objects illustrated. *The Story* had all its reproductions in full color, where *The Enjoyment* has only one such plate. The cuts for *The Enjoyment* have all been borrowed from other publications and institutions, a method which in some cases limited choice but resulted in a higher standard than one might have expected. It has led, also, in a few instances, to docile acceptance of attributions attached to a picture frame by a donor and retained by a museum. These half-tones are indeed superior to the full-color work in *The Story*, for many of the illustrations in the latter were excessively small and might have been borrowed from a publisher of cheap color reproductions.

*A Treasury* included only one hundred and forty-four illustrations but they were all full page and in full color, made from new plates. While the little essays by Thomas Craven opposite each picture contributed in small degree to the reader's knowledge of anything other than the critic's opinions, the plates were much better on the whole than in either of the compilations by the authors of the present work. *The Enjoyment* is limited to objects available in America north of the Rio Grande, where *A Treasury* covered European painting since the Renaissance, with some Mexican and American works. As the price of both *The Enjoyment* and *A Treasury* is ten dollars, on publication, there is no ground for preference based on cost. Any indication of scale is omitted in all three publications, so that a small jade ornament, a panel, or a print may appear on the page as large as a huge decorative canvas. A bibliography is to be found only in *The Story*.

As a survey of the treasures of American museums imposed by the availability of cuts and the opinions of benefactors, *The Enjoyment of Art in America* is a useful collection of half-tone illustrations.

A. PHILIP McMAHON  
New York University

JACOB BURCKHARDT, *Force and Freedom, Reflections on History*, Edited by James Hastings Nichols, 382 pages. Pantheon Books, Inc., New York, 1943. \$3.50.

The translation into English of some of the great German books in art history will be one of the necessary tasks for the scholarly world of a better peacetime. Students of the future will, so we hope, enjoy the masterpieces of Wölfflin, Riegl, Schlosser and Dvorak in their entirety and thus feel more equipped for their own contribution to a truly international field of learning.

For this reason it is an event of major importance that one of the hitherto untranslated works of Jacob Burckhardt has, in spite of war, been presented to us in an excellent translation and in an attractive edition. The *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* published here under the title *Force and Freedom* is not a book concerned directly with the arts but it was written by one of the great art historians of the modern era and for this reason alone it deserves our consideration. Beyond this, the book deals with three underlying constituents of artistic creation, state, religion and culture and their interaction in the historical field, which fact in itself would justify a review in this periodical.

In the proper sense of the word the *World Historical Observations* has never been a book and its prose clearly betrays this. The Basle scholar was singularly opposed to the publication of his lecture manuscripts and thus the "true Burckhardt" did not appear until after his death. Even his most popular work, *The Culture of the Renaissance*, in its numerous later editions was never revised by the author himself or ever quoted in his lectures. The controversy of his specialized colleagues on the one hand, the uncritical popularization of his ideas by massprint on the other hand, frightened the lonely man whose sensitivity was only surpassed by his utter lack of self-importance. All his effort and devotion therefore went into public lectures which he presented either to students at the University of Basle or to a more or less pedestrian group at the museum. The manuscripts for these lectures were prepared with the utmost care yet without losing the peculiar character of the *spoken* word which he used parsimoniously, distinctly and with the freshness of expression characteristic of the great Swiss writers of the 19th century.

These lectures on the working of history were presented between 1868 and 1871, and occasionally reflect the atmosphere of crisis attendant on the Franco-Prussian war. Yet a greater detachment from the mere accidental, from wishes and conventions can hardly be imagined. Leonardo's bird's-eye view of the realm of nature is here paralleled by one of the realm of history. The comparison is chosen intentionally. As in Leonardo the totality of phenomena is grasped as an organic context while finalities, generalizations or systematizations are carefully avoided. It is the pulse of history we feel and not the mechanism. For such an attitude Burckhardt

was predestined (just as Leonardo, the naturalist) by an unfailing aesthetic attitude which aims at the preservation of phenomena within their own life atmosphere.

The style is condensed: often one sentence has absorbed the material for an entire chapter of his *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, of his *Public Lectures* (also posthumously published), or a phrase reappears in extensive discussion in his beautiful letters to Friedrich von Preen, Paul Heyse, and other friends. Therefore observant reading is required, reading in which the abbreviated and unproven statement has to be reconnected with other facts and re-examined for its truth. Yet the reader will be rewarded by acquaintance with a spirit which, like everything truly great is unfathomable, yet basically simple.

These lectures deal with the forces which motivate history: state, religion and culture. Having determined their peculiar features as revealed in historical phenomena, their reciprocal action is examined with countless examples which cover the entire field of European and Islamic history. Then the author proceeds to what he calls "accelerated processes" in the chapter on "The Crises of History." But, since all historical events are generated by men and endured by men, since the study will thus be "pathological in kind" (p. 82), there follow two final chapters on "The Great Men of History" and on "Fortune and Misfortune in History" which are extremely typical of Burckhardt's ethical humanism but which are also conditioned to a greater degree by the period in which he wrote than is the rest of the book.

This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the book such as one may find in the informed introduction by the translator, James Hastings Nichols. It must suffice to point out what the student and teacher of art history might discover in occasional remarks relating to his field: immediately in the introduction we discern the key to Burckhardt's conviction which removes him as far from Taine's determinism as from Schiller's moralism: "Homer and Pheidias are still beautiful while the good and the truth of their times are no longer in all respects ours" (p. 87). There follow in the next part of the introduction simple and golden words about the study and value of sources which will be valid as long as the bewildered beginner must open his Vasari. In the chapter on "Culture" there are a few condensed pages on the arts (pp. 143-146), these visible expressions of the "spiritual surplus" (p. 142). Here the autonomy of the work of art is set forth proudly and here we find a few thought-provoking remarks about the relation of idea to form, which have lost nothing of their validity. Art as the most comprehensive symbol of man's self-expression is briefly hinted at on pp. 163-165. And there is on pp. 191-192 a condensed summary of the relation of art to religion which, although aphoristic like everything in these lectures, is saturated with historical experience. We find on p. 314 a definition of style which we quote as an example of

the author's lucid formulations: "what the great masters have given to the world in free creation can, by virtue of the way tradition is propagated in these fields, be retained by excellent minor masters as style."

Burckhardt looks at history in a two-fold way: it is to him "the historical," the field of action in the realm of time; yet history to him means also (and here he follows Schopenhauer, the much admired) *memnosyne*—memory. History is the *continuum* of man's conscious life preserved in his memory.

ALFRED NEUMEYER  
Mills College

JACOB I. BIEGELEISEN and MAX A. COHN. *Silk Screen Stenciling as a Fine Art*, with an Introduction by Rockwell Kent, xiv + 179 p., 35 pl. (3 in color). New York, 1942, McGraw-Hill Book Company. \$2.50.

With the exception of the two earlier primers on the subject by Anthony Velonis, published by the New York Federal Art Project, Mr. Biegeleisen's first book, *The Silk Screen Printing Process*, first published in 1938 with E. L. Busenbark as co-author, served for two or three years as the only technical source book of information on the silk screen process as adapted to the fine arts. This 1942 publication has most of the merits of Mr. Biegeleisen's other works, exhibiting a thoroughgoing knowledge of materials and processes, clear-cut illustrations, and lucid explanations of procedure. It gives little evidence of new experimentation in the technique and covers to a large extent the same ground as that covered by the previous publication. It contains a brief additional chapter on the historical background of the stencil technique from its use by primitive man and the ancients, through its use in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Orient, up to the rebirth and development of the contemporary techniques by Anthony Velonis and a group of enthusiastic artists on the New York Federal Art Project in 1938. The material is presented in manual form and presumably addressed to creative artists. It gives little emphasis to the commercial techniques, shop practices, costs, and so forth, treated in the earlier publication.

The book begins with a well illustrated discussion of the basic principles and the basic equipment needed for artistic silk screen printing, together with a description of the building of the equipment. The authors neglect, in their explanation of the stretching of the silk on the frame, to mention a very efficient and quick modern device known as No-Tax Sealer, a kind of non-elastic, heavy twine put out by J. Carlton Jones, Glenside, Pennsylvania, which can be forced with a wedge and hammer into a groove previously milled into the frame. The use of No-Tax results in a much more uniform and a quicker stretch than that obtained by the use of tacks.

A description of the various block-out materials and methods, such as

paper and paint-in stencils, follows, after which the reader is taken into the various ramifications of the use of tusche, perhaps the most exciting and alluring of all the silk screen processes because of the freedom for original expression it offers. The authors confine themselves to the treatment of the glue-tusche combination. The reviewer would like to call attention to the use of tusche with a brush, or the lithographic crayon, or glue as the drawing material with lacquer as the block-out material. He has had very satisfactory results from this combination in his classes when printing with water colors, either show card or distemper colors. The air brush has also been used in producing very interesting effects and textures by putting the tusche through the gun and spraying directly onto the silk.

The uses of the film stencil, which in reality is simply an improved commercial, and more flexible, adaptation of the paper stencil, and the photographic stencil method which has given such an impetus to the commercial silk screen process work, are described in order.

The first eight chapters, dealing chiefly with the processes involved in single color printing, are followed by three chapters on multicolor printing, color, and printing. The process of multicolor printing which one would expect to find one of the most interesting chapters is confined to the technique of registration and the mechanics of commercial color printing.

The chapter on color is the Achilles heel of the manual. There is so much that could have been said and so much that needs to be said technically on the physics of light, the chemistry of the paints and printing materials, and the psychology of vision involved in a fine arts process such as the silk screen that one experiences a decided let down. The authors' handling of this subject is disappointingly meagre and somewhat confusing in nomenclature. In their treatment of tempera colors it is not clear whether the authors are speaking of true tempera or distemper colors (the gum-water, glue-size, poster type of color). At times it seems that the paints under discussion are distempers until one reads such statements as these: "Tempera water colors are naturally transparent; therefore you cannot paint a light color on a darker surface. The only opaque tempera colors are black and white." These statements would hold true for real tempera but scarcely for poster colors all of which have some inorganic base such as chalk, calcium sulphate, or china clay upon which the dye stuff is precipitated and which makes them opaque. One function of the addition of a plasticizer such as that put out by Sargent is to render the distemper paint more translucent. Both types of paint could be and have been used in silk screen printing.

The greatest disappointment in these last chapters lies in the selection of the palette recommended to the beginner. If there is any part of the silk screen process that needs to be changed, in adapting it to use as a medium of artistic expression, it is certainly in the pigments and paints used; they must be converted from the highly fugitive and often chemically

incompatible pigments of the commercial silk screen process, to the permanent and chemically compatible pigments of the fine arts. An informed artist would certainly not use, on either an oil or water color palette, such a fugitive and chemically incompatible group of colors as that recommended in the book under review. If the silk screen prints of artists are to live, why not execute them in as sound a palette as would be used in other fine arts? After all is said and done, the same basic principles of pigment mixture, visual mixture, and chemical compatibility hold for all. In essence the physical principles of the absorption and reflection of light by films of color are the same for glazing in oil as for silk screen transparent printing as are also the principles of close juxtaposition of small spots of color and visual mixture in opaque silk screen printing and opaque painting. The artistic life of the silk screen print is as much dependent upon the soundness of the media selected for its execution as upon the artistic handling of the media for creative expression. If it is to become anything more than a commercial poster it must be executed with fine arts materials by creative artists in accordance with fine arts principles. We have the benefit of the costly and disastrous experience of the painters of Whistler's time who were lured to a sad artistic ending by the gay brilliance of the then new and untried coal-tar derivative paints. Why should contemporary artists with all the chemical knowledge available for the asking continue in the pitfalls of incompatible and fugitive paints? The reviewer would refer the reader to TS-3194 *Artists' Oil Paints CS 98-42*, issued by the Bureau of Standards at Washington, and the works of such authors as Fox and Bowles, Doerner, Mayer, Klein, and Weber for information on this subject. It is high time that artists come out of the petitfog and ignorance regarding the materials with which they are working. There is an excellent field of informative literature available on the subject which does not require that an artist be a physicist, a chemist, or a psychologist.

The only other recent literary attempt to interest and inform artists about the possibilities, creative joys and satisfactions to be derived through silk screen printing is the recent publication by Mr. Sternberg whose book was reviewed in the January number of the *COLLEGE ART JOURNAL* and which contains little more information than that to be found in the two Velonis monographs. There has as yet, to the reviewer's knowledge, been no book published which treats the subject of silk screen printing from any other than the technical standpoint. Silk screen stenciling "as a fine art" is still to be published. Taken all in all the book under review continues to remain, in the opinion of the reviewer, the best technical manual on the basic principles of procedure, and it is hoped that the woefully disappointing chapters on multicolor printing and color will be revised before the next edition.

BERTHE C. KOCH  
*University of Omaha*

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*Why Exhibit Works of Art? (Collected Essays on the Traditional or "Normal" View of Art)*, by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, 148 p., 1 pl. London, 1943, Luzac & Co. 6 s.

*Letters to Ambroise Vollard & André Fontainas*, by Paul Gauguin, edited by John Rewald, 68 p., 10 woodcuts. San Francisco, 1943, The Grabhorn Press. \$20.00

*The Latin-American Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York*, by Lincoln Kirstein, 112 p., 113 pl. (one in color: Orozco, Zapatistas). New York, 1943. The Museum of Modern Art. \$2.00

*The Aesthetic Process*, by Bertram Morris [Northwestern University Studies in the Humanities, No. 8], x + 189 p. Evanston, 1943, Northwestern University. \$2.25

*Medieval Art*, by Charles Rufus Morey, xv + 412 p., 179 ill. New York, 1942, W. W. Norton & Company. \$6.50

*Albrecht Dürer*, by Erwin Panofsky, vol. I, x + 311 p., 8 ill; vol. II, 36 + 206 p., 325 ill. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1943. \$20.00

*Brookgreen Gardens, Sculpture*, by Beatrice Gilman Proske, xlviii + 510 p. + plan showing location of sculpture, 143 pl. Brookgreen, S.C., 1943, Brookgreen Gardens. \$1.25

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THE College Art Association takes great pleasure in announcing that through the generosity of the Carnegie Corporation it will offer again for the year 1944-45 a number of grants-in-aid to outstanding graduate students of the History of Art for the purpose of assisting them to complete their graduate work. These grants, open to men and women, will be given only to advanced students of at least one year's graduate standing who have shown particular promise, and preference will generally be given to students about to embark on a doctoral dissertation or some comparable piece of research. Each candidate for a grant-in-aid will submit with his application an extended statement of the plan and purpose of his graduate study for the coming year, and may be asked to meet with the Committee on Scholarships of the College Art Association for a personal interview on a date to be named after the receipt of his application. The recipient of each grant-in-aid will be expected at a specified time to send to the Committee on Scholarships a statement of work accomplished.

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Application blanks may be obtained after January 1, 1944 through the heads of departments conducting graduate work in the History of Art or from Professor Rensselaer W. Lee, College Art Association of America, 625 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N.Y. Applications must be returned to Professor Lee by February 15. Awards will be made early in April.

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